

**What is claimed is:**

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1. A method for decreasing image acquisition time in a digital image device, comprising:  
capturing an image;  
dividing the image into a plurality of image segments;  
performing image processing on each of the plurality of image segments;  
and  
storing each of the plurality of image segments on the storage medium.

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2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the performing step comprises performing image processing on each of the plurality of image segments sequentially.

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3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the storing step comprises beginning storage of each of the plurality of image segments as soon as a first one of the plurality of image segments arrives at the storage medium.

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4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the performing step and the storing step are performed simultaneously on at least two of the plurality of image segments.

5. The method according to claim 3, wherein the dividing step comprises:

dividing the image into a plurality of image segments that overlap one another.

6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

stitching the plurality of image segments together to restore the image after the performing step.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the stitching step comprises:

stitching the plurality of image segments together sequentially following the performing step.

8. The method according to claim 6, wherein the performing step comprises:

performing at least a portion of the image processing in at least two parallel image processing stages.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the performing step comprises:

performing at least a portion of the image processing in at least two parallel image processing stages.

10. A computer-readable medium computer-executable instructions for performing the steps comprising:

capturing an image with a digital image device;

dividing the image into a plurality of image segments;

performing image processing on each of the plurality of image segments;

and

storing each of the plurality of image segments on the storage medium.

11. The computer-readable medium according to claim 10, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the performing step comprising performing image processing on each of the plurality of image segments sequentially.

12. The computer-readable medium according to claim 11, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the storing step comprising beginning storage of each of the plurality of image segments as soon as a first one of the plurality of image segments arrives at the storage medium.

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13. The computer-readable medium according to claim 12, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the performing step and the storing step simultaneously on different ones of the plurality of image segments.

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14. The computer-readable medium according to claim 12, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the dividing step comprising:

dividing the image into a plurality of image segments that overlap one another.

15. The computer-readable medium according to claim 10, having further computer-executable instructions comprising:

stitching the plurality of image segments together to restore the image after the performing step.

16. The computer-readable medium according to claim 15, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the stitching step comprising:

stitching the plurality of image segments together sequentially following the performing step.

17. The computer-readable medium according to claim 15, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the performing step comprising:

performing at least a portion of the image processing in at least two parallel image processing stages.

18. The computer-readable medium according to claim 10, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the performing step comprising:

performing at least a portion of the image processing in at least two parallel image processing stages.

19. An apparatus for decreasing image acquisition time in a digital image device, comprising:

an image sensor that captures an image;  
a controller that divides the image into a plurality of image segments and performs image processing of each of the plurality of image segments and outputs processed image segments; and  
a storage medium that stores each of the processed image segments.

20. The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the controller is arranged to perform the image processing of the plurality of image segments sequentially.

21. The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the controller is arranged to store each of the processed data segments as each of the processed data segments arrives at the storage medium.

22. The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the controller is arranged to stitch the processed image segments together to restore the image.

23. The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the controller is arranged to perform at least a portion of the image processing in at least two parallel image processing stages.

24. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
storing image file information on the storage medium, wherein the image file information corresponds to the plurality of image segments for an image stored on the storage medium; and

updating the image file information that has been affected by the image processing performed on any one of the plurality of image segments.

25. The method according to claim 24, further comprising:

modifying at least one of the plurality of image segments stored on the storage medium that has been affected by the image processing performed on subsequent ones of the plurality of image segments stored on the storage medium.

26. The computer-readable medium according to claim 10, further comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of:

storing image file information on the storage medium, wherein the image file information corresponds to the plurality of image segments for an image stored on the storage medium; and

updating the image file information that has been affected by the image processing performed on any one of the plurality of image segments.

27. The computer-readable medium according to claim 26, further comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the step of:

modifying at least one of the plurality of image segments stored on the storage medium that has been affected by the image processing performed on subsequent ones of the plurality of image segments stored on the storage medium.